

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 10621 111529Z

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ACTION NEA-12

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6704

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 10621

STADIS////////////////////////////////

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, IN

SUBJ: CONSULTATION WITH INDIA ON DISPOSAL OF STOCKPILED OPIUM

REF: A) STATE 177257; B) NEW DELHI 9676; C) STATE 151581

BEGIN SUMMARY: WE CONCUR FULLY IN DESIRABILITY OF CONSULTATION WITH GOI ON OPIUM STOCKPILE PROPOSALS AND TONE OF PROPOSED TALKING PAPER EXPRESSED IN REF A. WE WOULD APPRECIATE CLARIFICATION OF REASONS FOR WISHING TO DISCUSS POPPY STRAW WITH GOI. WE BELIEVE THAT RAISING ISSUE OF NARCOTICS CONTROLS EVEN INFORMALLY WITH INDIA WOULD BE INEFFECTIVE AT PRESENT. END SUMMARY.

1. WE CONCUR IN DESIRABILITY OF CONSULTING WITH GOI ON STOCKPILE DISPOSALS AND BELIEVE THAT THE PROPOSED TALKING PAPER SETS OUT EXTREMELY WELL THE BUSINESS LIKE APPROACH WE SHOULD UTILIZE IN THIS AND OTHER SUBJECTS.

2. WE STRONGLY RECOMMEND THAT ADEQUACY OF INDIAN CONTROLS OVER CURRENT OPIUM PRODUCTION AND ANY PLANNED EXPANSION NOT BE DISCUSSED AT PRESENT WITH THE INDIANS, EVEN ON AN INFORMAL ORAL BASIS. UNLIKE OTHER COUNTRIES WHERE WE CAN UTILIZE OVERALL GOOD RELATIONS AS MEANS OF MOVING THE GOVERNMENT TOWARDS MORE EFFECTIVE OPIUM CONTROL SYSTEMS, THE CHILLY, ALTHOUGH CORRECT, RELATIONS EXISTING BETWEEN THE US AND

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GOI CAUSE USG INITIATIVES TO BE GREETED WITH SUSPICION.

THIS IS CERTAINLY TRUE IN OPIUM CONTROL PROBLEMS, WHERE ANY ATTEMPT TO RAISE THE PROBLEM AT AN OFFICIAL LEVEL IS MET WITH THE REPLY THAT THERE IS NO PROBLEM TO DISCUSS. THE DCM ALLUDED TO DOUBTS CONCERNING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INDIAN CONTROLS DURING JULY 27 TALK WITH INDIAN COMMISSIONER OF REVENUE (NEW DELHI 8794) AND GOT EXACTLY THIS RESPONSE. AN OFFICIAL REBUFF COULD ALSO JEOPARDIZE EFFICACY OF UNOFFICIAL WORKING LEVEL CONTACT BETWEEN OUR DEA REPRESENTATIVE AND CBI OFFICIALS.

3. IT HAS BEEN THE EMBASSY'S JUDGEMENT THAT WHILE THE GOI CONTROL SYSTEM IS FAR FROM PERFECT, WE HAVE NO INFORMATION OF ANY SIGNIFICANT INTERNATIONAL OPIUM LEAKAGE OUTSIDE THE IMMEDIATE SOUTH ASIA AREA. MOREOVER, AS FAR AS WE KNOW, NO OTHER COUNTRY IS CONCERNED ABOUT LEAKAGE FROM HERE. IN SAYING THIS, WE DO NOT SEEK TO MINIMIZE POTENTIAL LEAKAGE OR THE DESIRABILITY OF AN EFFECTIVE CONTROL SYSTEM. THE EMBASSY'S DRUG COMMITTEE IS REVIEWING THIS SUBJECT AND WILL PRODUCE A MORE DEFINITE VIEW AS SOON AS WE HAVE A CHANCE TO REVIEW THE EVIDENCE THOROUGHLY.

4. THE EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT MULTILATERAL ORGANIZATIONS ARE THE BEST FORUM TO PUT PRESSURE ON THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT TO DEVELOP MORE EFFECTIVE CONTROLS. WE ARE CONCERNED THAT IF WE PLAY OUR HAND BILATERALLY, WE WILL REDUCE THE PROSPECTS FOR EFFECTIVE MULTILATERAL ACTION. WE ARE SEEKING TO DEVELOP INFORMATION TO RAISE AT NEXT YEAR'S CND SESSION, BUT WE WOULD PREFER NOT TO USE THE FRAMEWORK OF BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS TO RAISE THIS ISSUE. IF THE INDIANS WISH CONSULTATIONS ON OPIUM PRODUCTION, MARKETING, AND OTHER TECHNICAL ISSUES, THE EMBASSY WOULD BE CERTAINLY AGREEABLE. THIS SHOULD FLOW NATURALLY FROM THE EMBASSY'S TALKS WITH THE GOI VISUALIZED IN PARA 12 OF THE TALKING PAPER.

5. WE FAIL TO SEE THE REASON FOR RAISING WITH INDIA THE QUESTION OF INCREASED PRODUCTION THROUGH UTILIZATION OF POPPY STRAW AFTER OPIUM GUM AND SEED HAVE BEEN HARVEETED. AS WE NOTED IN REF B, THE PRODUCTION OF POPPY STRAW FROM LANCED PODS WOULD REQUIRE NEW INVESTMENT IN PLANT AND EQUIPMENT WHICH THE GOI IS LIKELY TO BE RELUCTANT TO MAKE, AND LANCED POD POPPY STRAW PRODUCTION GIVES NO ADVANTAGE

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IN CONTROLLING DIVERSION INTO ILLICIT CHANNELS. THERE IS NO DIRECT CONNECTION BETWEEN STOCKPILE DISPOSALS AND POPPY STRAW THOUGH WE RECOGNIZE THAT PROCESSING OF POPPY STRAW COULD SIGNIFICANTLY BOOST THE WORLD SUPPLY OF MORPHINE. WE PREFER THAT THE ISSUE BE RAISED ONLY AFTER WE HEAR FROM THE GOI ON ITS PRODUCTION/MARKETING PLANS. WE ASSUME VIEWPOINT EXPRESSED IN PARA 5 OF REF C IS STILL VALID, THAT THE USG DOES NOT INTEND TO TAKE LEAD IN ENCOURAGING

AN INCREASE IN PRODUCTION, THAT THE CND IS THE APPROPRIATE
FORUM FOR SUCH DISCUSSIONS, AND OUR PRIMARY CONCERN IS
STILL TO PREVENT DIVERSION FROM LICIT PRODUCTION TO ILLICIT
MARKETS. WE WOULD APPRECIATE CLARIFICATION OF REASONS
FOR PRESSING POPPY STRAW ISSUE.
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